

IF TRUTH AT LAST BE TOLD

IF TRUTH AT LAST BE TOLD

FOR ADULTS ONLY

A. H. JAISINGHANI

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TO
MY TRUE AND FAITHFUL FRIEND
SABOO
WHOSE LOVE AND CARE HAVE MADE POSSIBLE
THE LEISURE OF WHICH
THIS BOOK IS A FRUIT

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

“WHEN the Tree of Knowledge is not planted by the Tree of Life and sucks not up sap from thence, it may be as well fruitful with evil as with good”. Mr. Amrita Jaisinghani whose feasts of reason and flows of soul our readers are already familiar with in his “Talks with Eeyaa,” “Dialogues in an Ashram,” “The Vision of Life” and “Spiritual Life,” is concerned in the following pages with showing us how in our neglect of life values we have allowed the very Tree of Life to remain stunted with but little sap for its own sustenance, not to speak of provision for the other Tree of Knowledge. The Author here sends his bugle call to ‘the man with the scythe’ to ‘clear the field of all weeds, of all thistles and thorns and the roots that are diseased,’ that the seeds of the New Life which the Eternal Bride shall sow may grow without let or hindrance.

Life—and Religion along with it—has degenerated into a bundle of conventions.

It has become purely external. Its true purpose in creation has been missed. The old wisdom is forgot which says that Life should first be drawn inside and lived in its intensity of self-analysis and self-purification, so that, when projected outside, it would purify society of its artificial pose and veneer, and make of it an instrument of goodness, beauty and Godliness. In the scheme of the New Life here unfolded there will no longer be a question of division of allegiance to Cæsar and to God, for verily whatever we render will be unto God.

“ Better for thee thine own Dharmā than that of thy superiors,” and, “ better thine own Kingdom on Earth than the Kingdom of God which is in Heaven,” are the pregnant and stirring words of the Author which recall most forcibly the Lord’s words to Arjuna on the field of Kurushetra. As an exposition of this much-needed message, we humbly place this book before the public in the hope that it will help many an aspirant to relearn the science of Life.

INTRODUCTION

THE first two chapters of this book were originally published in Akbar Ashram Tracts, and the remaining ten in "New Age," Vols. I and II. The words 'at last' in the title aroused a good deal of criticism. It was asked: "Are the words meant to convey that the 'Truth' is now being told for the first time?"

I have no pretensions of that kind, but the present century is, in some measure, I believe, fitted to deliver a verdict upon many institutions and ideals of the past. For the first time has the world been physically united through the modern means of communication and man's knowledge of the world, as of himself, extended to a degree which imparts to it an aspect of finality. The words 'at last,' then, should be understood to express the mental

phase of a whole century and not of an individual. It is the Spirit of the age which 'at last' is able to speak and through more than one channel. 'At last' smacks of vanity no more than 'telling the truth'. It requires some presumption to 'tell the truth' and everyone has it. He who does not 'presume' cannot live, and while truth and humility are synonymous terms, humility and diffidence are not.

So much for the title. I have a few words to add regarding the subject matter and the style of the book. In these days of Round Table Conferences, round theories of space, life and morality, I seek relief in square things. And so in this book I have had my say in plain, square words. In this one *boutique* at least I refuse to sell *bon-bon*. Here I have things of acid taste which to the lover of sweet things may act as poison. But I have done my duty: I have attached a red label to my bottles!

I am reminded that my present style of writing is a departure from the past. I

am not conscious of that. All I can say is, that this book was planned and half-written more than seven years ago and formed the background of my subsequent writings. There is no real departure. The bottles may be different, but the vessel from which they are filled is the same. Behind the apparent sarcasm of this book there is no desire to wound, but to heal ; behind its criticism of ideals and institutions there is no desire to destroy, but to build ; behind its seeming irony there is no desire to ridicule but to arouse the consciousness of those it may reach, to the deceit, hypocrisy and injustice of our times. The book, I assure the reader, is written neither with a view to deride the past or the present, nor to provide some moments of amusement, but to give expression to the pain and sorrow of a feeling heart. One aspiration of the writer is that it may awaken the same in others.

Karachi

A. H. JAISINGHANI.

14th April, 1933.

TRUTH AND RELIGION

IF Truth at last be told in this world of deceit, men will scoff at Truth and call it madness. But, what then? Were not ridicule, mockery and hatred the fate of all those whom men worship as their saviours? Did ever Truth come into being without meeting derision? Did ever man call Truth a truth before it became a falsehood again? Let, then, the Truth be told and let it be called madness!

* * *

Verily, the word 'Truth' already smacks of deceit and superciliousness. Subtle are the ways of Satan: he leaves 'Truth' to man but over it sprinkles the dust of Desire, and lo! Desire conquers and Truth is naught! Desire grows more and more till it covers all,—like the weeds by the side of water—like the thistles and thorns in the fields. The more it grows the more poignant it becomes. Soft in the beginning, it

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soon grows rough and difficult to uproot. Is not such the condition of the world ? Is not such the malady of man ? Love is banished by Desire and Truth no longer holds the field.

* * *

Lo ! the world is smouldering in the heat of Desire and the smouldering will soon grow into a flame. Terrible is the Demon of Desire in his naked form ; hidden, he becomes invincible. Many a nation pays him open homage, but here he pursues us hidden in his saffron robe. When he invades other fields of life it requires a wise man, a hero or a saint to drive him away. When he crosses the path of religion it requires no less than a prophet to defeat his plans. Nay, often he deceives the prophets : that is why he crowns them with ' success ' and turns them into ' priests '.

* * *

Religion is my best armour, says man. And the same says Satan ! Equally invincible is he in the cool asylum of Art and in the sanctuary of Science. These truly are his safest retreats and there doth

he hide himself. Yet must Truth rise to conquer, or where shall the world be tomorrow?

* * *

“Tomorrow !” “Tomorrow !!”—After Tomorrow stare all men. Christ asked men to prepare for the Kingdom of the Morrow and the way, he told them, was to give their all To-day. The Demon of Desire preaches also in the name of Tomorrow. But the way to attain it, he says, is not to give but to gather.

* * *

Lo ! all prepare, but for what, they know not. They gather, knowing not what they gather. Everybody wants more than he needs and, lo ! everybody has less. The ‘preparing’ never ends and ‘Tomorrow’ never comes !

* * *

Each prepares in his own way : the world looks like a busy hive. Adept are the children of Adam in the art of hoarding ! But, lo ! the Bee-master cometh when the hive is full and he emptieth it.

Full, indeed, was the Hive of Humanity, laden with the fruits of knowledge and of the toil of millions of men. But, alas ! they who guarded the Hive realized not their responsibility. While they fought among themselves, out of their hands was stolen that for which they fought. No sooner is the Hive full than there ensues a war or the Bee-master arrives on some other pretext.

* * *

Man ! but for thy greed where would the world be to-day ? What heights of glory could it not reach ? Through greed, Greed alone doth prosper ; not thyself.

* * *

Alas ! who will teach you the truth of Tomorrow ? "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall put on. For is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ?"—Little do ye heed these words of religion, yet fight ye in the name of the Kingdom of Tomorrow !

* * *

But the raiment is not all that men covet, or bread and meat. Greater temptations

than these doth the Tempter possess. To the poor he offereth 'wealth,' to the rich his 'pleasures'; others he winneth by a promise of power, or they rush into his Snare of Fame. But the 'holy ones' who rise above these—what shall he offer them? Them he bindeth with the Rope of Religion! Muffled in his holy cloak he walketh the world, playing upon his little reed. And behold the white sheep wending through the world's divergent ways! They keep to their flocks and revile the rest each believing it follows the voice of the reed, each believing it alone knows the way to the Grazing Field. Where shall THIS flock be gathered and where THAT,—there is much speculation, but in vain! For to the same one place all sheep are led,—the Butcher alone knoweth their fate!

* * *

Alas for you that possessing eyes would not see and seeing would not believe and believing would not act!

* * *

Ye condemn one another, but Satan laugheth! Ye, also, belittle the past and

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compare your 'virtues' with the crimes of other men. Yet, are not your 'virtues' but polished sins? However much ye hide your dark spots under the white robe of religion, their blackness still shall blacken your souls. However much ye polish your sins, they shall never be made less. All the skill of the alchemist has never changed the copper into gold. In deceiving others ye first deceive yourselves. Why then these names? Why these colours—these cloaks? They serve but to deceive; they change not the facts!

* * *

Indeed, what have these men in snow-white frocks left undone for which they condemn others? Were ever wars more impious fought than those they call 'Jihads' and 'Crusades'? Were not the days of the Inquisition darker than the days of Diocletian? Many a deed of a Pope and a Khalif would put a Nero to shame. And beware of the Brahmin and the Yellow Monk. 'Religion' to them is nothing but a flourishing trade!

Alas for thee, oh 'Land of Religion' ! Irreligion still is thy biggest crime. Many a crime hast thou concealed under the Cloak of Custom. Thy inherent evils thou exaltest with the name of Spirituality. Look at thy hideous face and soiled garments,—thou callest that Simplicity ! Look at thy indolence and poverty,—thou callest that Renunciation ! Superstition, ignorance and the inner egoism of thy mind that divideth thy children one from another,—thy name for them is Religion !

* * *

" Religion ! " " Religion !! "—The eternal cry of this land is " Religion ". Religion is that of which thou least canst boast. Every land crieth for what it lacketh and produceth as its fruit that which supplieth its want. Thus in the dry mountains the earth brings forth its sweetest fruits ; Jesus, the Lord of Love, was born among the ' Jews ' ; and India is the place of saints and sages for, truth to tell, it is here that sinners most abound ; it is here that religion is at a low ebb.

What religion do you want, my brethren ?—A cloak wherewith to hide your sins,—sins of the flesh, sins of the mind, inertia and your lack of faith, slavery and your nakedness, cowardice and your unutterable shame ? Ye want a soft, boneless religion that teaches you to renounce life and not yourselves ! But they who deny Life shall themselves be denied.

* * *

“The world stands on God’s sacrifice,” so the sages of India said. But ye sacrifice the world to make God stand ! Alas ! what a poor God ! If life be a product of God’s sacrifice, let it not be sacrificed to God !

* * *

False religion teaches men to sacrifice the world. The voice of true religion is : *sacrifice thyself !* When Life withholds nothing from thee, why withhold thyself from Life ?

* * *

Can any one offer his empty life to God ? Nay ! Offer not to your Deity empty shells. Treat Him not as a beggar. Beware of His wrath !

He hath given you life not that it may be mortified but that ye may fulfil it and then bring it as an offering unto Him. Woe unto you who guide your lives by 'religion' but guide not your religion by Life !

* * *

What gods do you worship, my brethren ? Many are the demons hidden in your homes ! They disguise themselves as gods. Each nation has chosen her demons. Some worship the demons of Power and Wealth. They at least are strong. But fie upon you ! Even the demons ye worship are weak. Strong demons have at least the goodness to come and meet you in the open field. But your weak demons lie concealed under your beds. Beware of them !

* * *

"Krishna ! " "Krishna ! "—many shout this name with pride. But Krishna preached no false renunciation. He preached the Path of Action. Alas ! what paths have ye chosen to-day ! Verily, the devil denieth not God except in action !

I see this practical atheism sapping the soul of our nation. Verily, an atheist is not he who entereth not the temple, but he who deserteth the Field of Life, which is the only true Temple of God. For God wants not flatterers but workers. What careth He for your false prayers and sham praise, oh men? What careth He whether ye utter His name or not?

* * *

Believe ye that your Father can still sit quiet in the cosy corners of your 'temples' when His children are dying of hunger and cold? Believe ye that He can hear your false and cunning prayers when His ears are caught by the cries of the oppressed—the sickly ones, the hungry ones, the crying babes, the sad mothers and the drudging slaves? Believe ye that He is happy and content as ye are? Nay! He heareth no more your prayers nor sitteth quiet in your temples. He wandereth alone in the world, and your doors are shut upon wanderers!

TOMBS OR TEMPLES ?

MAN built his first temple on the earth to found a sanctuary for his soul. But, lo ! in your 'temples' are your souls ever chastised ! He thought, he would see in it the Face of his Lord and find unity with his brethren. But, lo ! in your temples sit demons with open jaws and instead of unity ye find discord !

* * *

Man thought he would bring to his temple the best offerings of his heart and with them worship his God. But, lo ! your temples have become centres of trade and therein ye rob your God !

* * *

Man thought, in his temple, he would drown the sorrows of this life and find his peace of mind. But, lo ! your sorrows grow in your temples and your peace of mind is for ever lost !

Verily, these dark dens wherein ye gather so often and tell your beads are not temples but tombs. Therein ye have caged your gods and entombed them alive ! Ye allow them not to come into the field of life. Who, then, will captain the field ? Who will be your guide ? When the gods sleep in the temples Satan ruleth the world outside !

* * *

Undoubtedly, ye find it difficult to quarter your gods. That is why ye have built these temples ! That is why ye have buried them alive ! Ye shut them in like prisoners and offer them only the food of prayer !

* * *

Two prayers a day or three or five, and the rest of the day employed in the service of self,—this is what ye call a 'regulated religion ' ! Fixing certain convenient rules and outwardly conforming to them, secretly avoiding the same,—this is what ye call 'virtue,' 'morality' or 'regulated life ' ! A tithe of your stained earnings to the gods and the rest to yourselves,—this is

what ye call 'charity,' 'offering' and 'sacrifice'! A pleasant vacation, an occasional bath or a visit to a famous shrine,—this is what ye call 'pilgrimage' and a 'passport to paradise'! Such are the deceptions of this age! Such are the delusions of your minds!

* * *

And what are these shrill sounds of conches and shells that passing I hear again and again? Methinks, they are devices of the Subtle One to put your gods to flight or drown their voices, so that they reach not your ears. But still they wait and still they cry! They cry for your souls, but ye hear them not. Ye beat your drums to silence them. Lo! your drums beat louder and louder and their voices grow feebler, every day!

* * *

Once ye heralded your gods by the beat of your drums. They entered your homes with the triumphant sounds of your shells. But to-day your drums beat *behind* your gods!

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When, perchance, they escape from your 'temples' and enter your homes and streets, ye hiss them off, imprison them, or take them to a Cross! Your children follow them with pipes and hunt them like animals out of the haunts of men!

* * *

Miles around your cities vibrate these sounds. There is no place of seclusion, no sanctuary left on the earth. Neither your seas nor the air is silent. Lo! the buzzing sounds of the aeroplanes! Methinks, they are man's expeditions against the gods in flight.

* * *

What need have ye of temples, my friends? Sinners alone need temples as the sick need hospitals. The hospitals grow with the growth of disease. The more, therefore, temples I see the more despondent I become, and the more dejected at heart. These temples to me are a sign of your growing sins. Your religion, alas, is nothing but a symptom of your sickness. And how shall ye be

cured unless the surgeon enters his knife into your worm-filled flesh ? Ye have need of being wounded, my friends !

* * *

Yet ye avoid the surgeon's knife ! Pleasant drugs alone ye desire. And lo ! how sweet are the drugs your Chemist keeps ! You love those who deal in sweet drugs and hate the wielder of the knife. Those who prolong your agony ye respect as 'wise men' ; those who might cure you are 'mad'. And all this in the name of sanity and commonsense !

* * *

Loud, terribly loud, is the voice of 'Common Consent' ! Witness the inmates of the asylum appraising their visitors. How unanimous they are in their judgment and how sure ! They display much wisdom and even pity for their friends : "Lo ! these are the poor mad folk of the world," they say.

* * *

Indeed, is not perversion the essence of madness ? The 'mad' of this world are truly wise. And ye who are possessed of

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‘Commonsense,’—ye, ye, my brethren, are what?

* * *

Wisdom needeth no assurance, virtue needeth no consolation! If ye be virtuous why need ye enter these temples? If ye be godly, why need ye hanker after gods? If ye be sure of the value of your Faith why need ye strive for numbers and with them measure its greatness? If ye be what ye believe ye are, why need ye be such an unhappy lot?

* * *

There is no peace within your hearts. There is no happiness in your homes. Lo! your very temples are centres of deadly wars! Could the world be what it is if God were what ye worshipped and not Satan?

* * *

Verily, to another God than the one of whom ye are possessed must ye now pay your homage. With another Faith than that which is yours must ye worship the Lord. In another Shrine than that ye frequent must ye worship Him, and

with another heart ! Hitherto ye have worshipped disguised demons, my friends !

* * *

Break the doors of your temples ! Release your gods ! Let them face the light. Let us see whether they are really demons or gods. For darkness changeth many a god into a demon. These dark dens are just the places where demons could hide. Quit them ! Come out in the light !

* * *

Is not thy own heart thy best shrine, oh man ! Is not the voice of thy soul thy truest guide ? To what other voices wouldst thou listen ? What other shrines needst thou enter ? Enter first the Shrine of the Heart ! Then will the world to thee become a Sanctuary of the Soul. Then will all voices of discord melt into the Music of the Morn and the tombs of to-day change into Temples of God !

HELL AND HEAVEN

GOD hath one Kingdom. Satan boasteth of two !

* * *

Satan hath this advantage over God, that he entereth Heaven and Hell alike ; he hath no restrictions upon his will ; Satan is free ! And 'freedom,' truly, is from him ! God is but a slave, of Heaven though it be,—bound by inexorable laws, of His own making though they be.

* * *

And who hath more disciples,—God or Satan ? Satan can count his disciples in both Kingdoms. So often God serveth Satan's will !

* * *

Love of Heaven it is that maketh God a slave. Love of life it is that maketh Satan its Lord !

* * *

Great is thy courage, oh Satan !—greater than the 'wisdom' of a timid God ! Thou art acknowledged in both Kingdoms. And

how faithful are thy disciples! Many are the 'temples' they have raised to thee in the 'Kingdom of God'! There, secretly, do they worship thy image, outwardly conforming to the Other's 'Law'. Thy temples multiply!

* * *

Thy disciples forsake thee not. Greater is their love, more abiding their faith than the 'faith' of these men of God. Theirs is a faith in life-*after*-death, whereas in life-*before*-death, is the faith of thy disciples manifested! The faith of 'God's men' rests on a 'Heaven' with its 'trees of fruit' and 'rivers of honey and milk'. The faith of thy disciples survives the sins and sufferings of Hell, the trials and tribulations of the earth. The faith of 'God's men' is sustained by a promise of pleasure in the life to come, of thy disciples by slander and calumny. Yet thee it is men call Satan and the Other they worship as God!

* * *

Poor is the God who is fond of His Heaven. Through fondness He loseth his

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freedom. Fondness of Freedom also maketh man a slave.

* * *

What are these 'Laws' of the Kingdom of Heaven; what the 'moral principles' of men? I shall tell thee what they are: 'Principles' are the leaden horses with which the 'Children of Heaven' amuse themselves. Handsome and shining are their bodies. Look! what fine horses they are! They seem to neigh and stamp their hoofs upon the ground, as if ready to fly. But trust them not, my friend! These horses carry no loads. Many a man, nay, many a god, seated upon them hath broken his legs.

* * *

"Fear thy God!" ye have been taught. It makes one suspect something ungodly in this God. Fear, verily, is Satan's plough wherewith he plougheth the soil for his seeds; 'principles' are the fence with which he fortifies his fields, and rich is the crop he reaps. He hath no danger of thieves. For God Himself is the guardian of his fields!

* * *

False piety and the 'love of truth, which killeth the love of life, have maimed the gods and men alike. Many a 'saint' becometh a slave of his 'virtue'. He loseth in life that which he seeketh in Heaven and receiveth here that which he feareth above.

* * *

Ye distinguish between the followers of Satan and the men of God. Ye say, Satan's disciples are those that are consumed by earthly desires. Is the desire of Heaven less consuming? Slaves of Satan men would not be. Is the slavery of Heaven more desirable? I ask.

* * *

Fond, too fond, are ye of the name of freedom; too fond of the delights of Heaven. Ye believe life to be a product of Sin. 'Misery' is what ye fear and 'happiness' what ye covet. But ye heed not the words of the prophet: '*Fear casteth out happiness!*'

* * *

Satisfied are many with their lot; they look not towards a better end. They ask:

“ Is not satisfaction the test of happiness ? ”
And what shall we say unto them ? What
but this : Happy are the worms born in
filth and the more it decays the more
satisfied are they !

* * *

Enough, my soul ! say no more. Close
thine eyes and ears. Retire thou into thy
cave. Leave the world of men alone.
Offer not fruits, the food of the gods, unto
the eaters of flesh : Such be the voices,
sometimes, I hear. Still must I offer gods’
food unto men, and let the gods cry. For
my fidelity is unto Man and not unto
the gods ! Still must thou, oh disappointed
one ! strive to extricate thy comrades from
the quagmire of Heaven, from its dreams
of pleasure and desires more unholy than
their earthly similitudes.

* * *

Known to me, my brethren, are the scars
of your souls,—what if the body be pure ?
Known to me is the deceit and hollowness
of that Heaven whereunto ye aspire. But
for the dreams of that Heaven ye would
not make this earth a hell. But for that

God, how could Satan be chasing your souls ?

* * *

Verily, within your own desires is the seed of your suffering cast. Salvation ye must seek within yourselves. Look not unto your Lord !

* * *

Ye were taught to *look within* for the Kingdom of God and seek your happiness in the service of Man. But, "Heavenward ! " — "Heavenward ! " is your cry. Unto the sky your eyes are turned. There is much flying done. Oh, let not reason fly !

* * *

Like unto what is this hope of Heaven ? Shall I tell you, like unto what ? In the days of my childhood a juggler I saw. His feats of magic were admired by all. And know ye in what his magic lay ? Swiftly he played upon his pipe and turned his *tibki*¹ round and round. And while therein our eyes were caught, slowly he changed the pieces of the play. Like unto that *tibki* is this talk of Heaven. While

¹ A small drum carried by magicians.

around and about your glances ye cast,
 the Magician deals his cards. While ye are
 busy fighting for the 'Kingdom of God,'
 robbed are ye of the Kingdom of
 Earth.

* * *

There is a kite overhead. Children of
 earth, retire into your homes; go and
 hide your cakes. Believe me, the cakes of
 virtue need no airing. Exhibit them not;
 nor listen to any pipe that plays; nor
 care for the *tibki* that is tossed. For there
 is a kite overhead!

* * *

Demons, men think, live on the earth
 and the gods alone on high. But many a
 goblin hath wings to-day and heavenward
 doth it fly.

* * *

Too much fluttereth man his wings.
 Too much aspireth he after the Infinite.
 But they who wings possess do not always
 fly. The cock may well think itself a bird,
 for it can flap its wings. But it is not
 enough to desire. The wings of Desire
 flutter much, but they soar not high.

Other wings thou needest, if heavenwards
wouldst thou aspire !

* * *

Of all the dreams of man there is none
so deceptive as that of Heaven. It profit-
eth nothing while it lasteth long.

* * *

A born usurer is man ! He availeth not
himself of his treasure but lendeth it to
another, so that it may multiply. But,
alas ! in his greed he turneth old and
never seeth it back again. The fruits of
Life, the gifts of Nature, man renounceth
here for the promise of a greater reward.
But of what avail is it to make this life a
hell in order to gain a heaven in another ?

* * *

Alas for you that cannot be virtuous
without the fears of Hell or the promise of
Heaven to cheer your sinking hearts.
For hollow is such virtue. It becomes an
affliction of your souls.

* * *

And if this life prepares us for another,
think ye for what ye prepare ? Can the
denials of the one prepare you for the

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inheritance of the other? If this earth be a hell, think ye, how could ye here be trained for Heaven?

* * *

If for Heaven ye prepare, live here the life ye would live there. Make ye a heaven of your earthly home. Plant here the seeds ye scatter in the air. Sow the seeds of healthy actions in the fertile fields of earth and with the water of love nourish their roots. Then shall they grow into sturdy trees; then shall they bear good fruit!

* * *

Warm is the soil of dear old earth, fragrant are its sun-kissed breezes, while in heaven the stars complain of cold. Truly, Adam showed wisdom in his choice. Believe in his wisdom, abide by his faith!

RENDER UNTO . . .

“ RENDER unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s and unto God the things that are God’s” : thus, ye say, ye were taught. In the name of religion ye rob your God. Ye divide the world into two, give half to Satan and half to God, and so render unto Cæsar what is of God !

* * *

Nay ; ye render to him the better half : ‘ Prayers ’ and sham praises to God, to Cæsar the fruits of life and work. To God ye offer the dark hours of the night, to Cæsar ye dedicate your days. But Cæsar is never satisfied and ever demandeth more. So out of the hours of the night ye steal to render unto the master of the day !

* * *

Like the nocturnal birds know ye there are nocturnal men ? Owls have their feasts at night. And so eat and revel these men. And look at the little bat at play !

Many a moth finds its way into her mouth and many a wandering fly !

* * *

“ God created the heavens and the earth,” say our prophets. But Satan it is who ruleth over them ! God hath a temple here and there, but Satan’s shrine is everywhere !

* * *

“ Mind your temples, wander not abroad,” thus sayeth Satan to God. “ But I am the creator of this world,” sayeth our Lord. “ And I of man,” Satan gives reply. “ Did I not give to Adam the fruit which made him multiply ? ”

* * *

Then arrives religion—a mediator between God and Satan. Says she : “ Let each within his bounds remain.” “ Amen ! ” “ Amen ! ” say all men.

* * *

What is religion ? A compromise between Satan and God.

* * *

This is the age of Democracy. God may be great but Satan, too, hath a soul.

“Equality,” “Justice,” “Fairplay,” is ever Satan’s cry !

* * *

In the name of Democracy man couples Satan with God. In the name of Freedom he letteth evil loose over the world. In the name of Justice he maketh the Foul One free !

* * *

God created the universe in six days,— the earth, the firmament, the seas ; the fields of grass and fruit-trees ; the night, the stars and the living beings—the fish, the fowl, the cattle and finally man in His own image ! He said unto them : *Be fruitful and multiply !* Having done this He went to rest. Then, methinks, Satan it was who took up the work and he hath been busy ever since !

* * *

“Just a little room,” I heard a traveller say to another who rested upon his berth. “Just a little more,” he said again, “just a little more,” till the resting one sat up and the other stretched out instead. And the same doth Satan. For hath he not

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elbowed God into the temples, keeping the world to himself !

* * *

“Just a little room,” I hear it said again and again. I hear it when a town-square, or an old temple, or the site of a church is swallowed by a city stretching its arms; when seas are reclaimed, and roads extended over green fields and hills, for room must be found for Cæsar’s mills. So God and Nature move on to let Cæsar stretch his legs !

* * *

Beware of Cæsar, friends ! Render not unto him what is of God nor render unto Cæsar the ‘things which are Cæsar’s’. But *unto God render that which belongeth to Cæsar !* For Cæsar hath nought but that which he receiveth of God. Nay, doth not Cæsar call himself His servant ? But if Cæsar dwelleth apart let him no more exploit God !

* * *

Beware of these Cæsars ! Lo, many a tyrant ruleth in the name of the Lord ! To serve God and to serve mankind, to hold

civilization's banner high, to carry the torch of science afar, to protect the weak and to guide the strong, this is our mission, the Cæsars cry. But many a country is sick of her servants; many a nation bewaileth her lot.

* * *

Oh! let not the world be divided between Cæsar and God. Say no more: "Render unto Cæsar what is of him . . ." But say now: *We have learnt, there is none but God and all things belong unto Him.* Oh Cæsar! we distinguish not between thine and the things that are of God, nor between 'good' and 'evil' or that which is 'allowed' and that which is not. *We accept all! Even of thy weapons thou shalt be robbed. Them, too, we shall render unto God!*

* * *

Nor fear entering Cæsar's realm. But say: *We have been taught that God created the world with its waters and herbs, with the fish and the fowl and animals and men. And if all be from God how can all be but good? Why sayest thou, the one is good*

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while the other is not? Verily, we must even reclaim the evil and render it back to God!

* * *

Yea, render all unto God! But take ye care that God himself doth not become another Cæsar!

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

THOU art an exile from the Kingdom of Life: Seekest thou the 'Kingdom of Heaven'?

* * *

Sigh not, brother, for the Kingdom of Heaven. Too long hast thou sighed! Too long hast thou cried: "Thy Kingdom come!" But God's Kingdom still cometh and for it thou hast given up the Kingdom of Life. Thou art from both an exile!

* * *

Too long hast thou worshipped Truth as God and so hast forsaken the Truth which is Life! Verily, the Truths of God are for the gods. For man be the little truths of life!

* * *

Where is Truth? Oh! where is Truth? One sees here only its tombs and sepulchres, and they speak no more of Life! In Life

liveth Truth, in man liveth 'His Kingdom,'—not in the skies !

* * *

Lo ! many a weary soul waiteth for the Kingdom of God. Many a devout man prayeth : Thy Kingdom Come ! But God replies : My Kingdom is not for exiles !

* * *

Put thine own Kingdom in order, brother ! Better it is for thee to till thy native soil and enjoy its little fruits, than to yearn for the Kingdom of the skies !

* * *

Beware ! little chicken, try not to fly. Thy home is here upon the earth ! Verily, there are enough grains on earth for thee. Oh, do not from earth fly ; do not bruise thy little wings.

* * *

"For what, then, are these wings of mine ?" askest thou. Truly, brother, not to fly ! The wings of Desire flutter much, but they carry us not high.

* * *

Measure not thy stature by the tape of thy desire, nor thy strength by thy

greed. Verily, these betoken thy poverty. The higher thy desire soareth, the weaker shouldst thou reckon thyself.

Let not Desire and Virtue walk together. Desire often tempteth virtue on its heavenward flight. But in the cold of heaven Virtue shivereth and dieth in the arms of Desire.

* * *

Too much of oxygen poisoneth life; doth not too much virtue kill?

* * *

“ Better for thee is thine own *Dharma* than that of thy superiors,” and better, believe me, thine own kingdom on earth than the Kingdom of God which is in Heaven.

* * *

Alas! man feareth only *evil* and not *virtue*. Subtle are thy ways, oh Satan! Those stricken with evil may be cured through goodness, but who shall cure the *virtue*-stricken?

“ When salt hath lost its savour where-with shall it be salted ? ” If *virtue* itself

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becomes a craving wherewith shall it be quenched ? If the 'Kingdom of Heaven' becomes a temptation wherewith shall it be conquered ? Wherewith, indeed, shall it be conquered ?

* * *

Man is a *gourmand*,—he eateth more than he needeth, desireth more than he can retain. From hunger and indigestion he ever suffereth. Indigestion leadeth to hunger and the satisfaction of false hunger to indigestion. The more he sigheth for the Kingdom of Heaven the more unhappy he becometh !

* * *

Eat what thou canst digest, not what thou dost desire. Man's desire hath no bounds and, lo ! he vomiteth what he eateth and he eateth but to vomit !

* * *

Too much eating causeth indigestion. Doth not too much piety the same ? Oh, vomit not virtue, friend !

* * *

And many a one that truly hungereth and knoweth how to digest, knoweth not

what to eat. Verily, man must re-learn the Science of Life.

* * *

Civilized man hath forgotten how to bake his bread. He obtains his food from shops. And what foods do these shops provide?

* * *

“Trust not tinned foods,” said our fathers of old. Surely, they were wiser than their *civilized* children. For the delicacies of the shop are often decayed, though the tins shine and the labels look bright.

* * *

Learn to bake thy bread with thine own hands, brother. Beware of shops! Beware of the Shop of Tradition where thy mind obtains its ‘ready’ food. Heat the oven of thy mind. Take not things on trust!

* * *

Who that knoweth man knoweth not that he vomiteth but too soon the things he taketh on trust and casteth out good along with evil, virtue along with vice?

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Air killeth the creatures of water and excess of light maketh the cave-dwellers blind. How dangerous for the creatures of earth must then be the breezes of Heaven ? Lo ! many an aspirant hath been asphyxiated. To-day the air is poisoned with excess of piety and the light of God's Kingdom hath made many a man blind.

THE KINGDOM OF THE WOLF

VERILY, there are signs of the coming of another Kingdom. It is not the 'Kingdom of God'! It is not the Kingdom of Man! It is the Kingdom of the Wolf!

* * *

Too long hath man caged his brother. But now the wolf crieth for his freedom; for the breezes of the forest and the Kingdom he hath lost!

* * *

With many a rope did man entwine the wolf,—the ropes of 'piety,' 'virtue,' and 'religion'. And around them all he built a cage,—the dark cage of superstition. But, lo! the cage is creaking, and soon the ropes may be snapped. For the ropes are old and the wolf is hungered!

* * *

Daily doth man bring to his wolf the Bread of Heaven and the Wine of Virtue.

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The fruits of Knowledge and the syrups of Faith doth he offer unto the prisoner. But the prisoner eateth not this bread, nor drinketh from this heavenly cup. He hungereth after earthly meat!

* * *

Too much vegetarianism sickens the wolf and too much piety makes man ill.

* * *

Sayeth man to the wolf: Eat thou the bread of heaven which is good, drink thou the milk of virtue which is pure. The wolf listeneth but sayeth to himself: God created the goats in the forest; God created the sheep as well. And, surely, He it was who created me with my hunger for their flesh!

* * *

Man who hath tamed the dog and the horse hath not yet tamed the wolf. Oh, starve not thy wolf! For weak to-day thou art. Thy cage creaks. Its iron is rusted, its bars are broken. Beware! Anger not thy wolf!

* * *

If peace thou wouldest, unbind the wolf.
Tame him if thou canst, but rely not on
thy cage.

* * *

With patience man's tyranny he hath
borne, with patience hath he pleaded, but
in vain ! And now the wolf pleadeth no
more !

* * *

Too long hast thou been tied. Prometheus ! now unbind thyself. Thou shalt
conquer the Kingdom of Zeus. For lo !
thy Deliverer comes and there are voices
in the winds: "Thy Kingdom come!"
"Thy Kingdom come!"

BROTHER, SERVE THYSELF!

WHAT prompteth man to forsake his home, to 'renounce' the world and seek the 'Service of God'? Is it love or pity? Methinks, there is more of pity than love in this. And I pity the God who is so pitied!

* * *

And the cause of man's 'renunciation,'—is it aversion to life or his vanity and pride? Methinks, there is more vanity than aversion in 'renunciation'.

* * *

Many there be who leave the world to Satan and his like and themselves serve but God! Bravo! bravo! ye Servants of God! For at least ye save the world from yourselves!

* * *

"Wherefore dost thou wander?" I asked a sickly *fakir* in the forest. He

said, "I wander in the search of God !" And I was well pleased. For at least he saved the world from his sickness ! "Bravo ! bravo !" said I, "Bravo ! thou Seeker of God ! "

* * *

I met a *sadhu* on the mountain top. He ate but once a day and in hunger glorified his God. "Whence comest thou ?" I asked. And thus he spake : "Rich was I and blessed with worldly wealth. But here I seek the riches of God !" "Bravo ! bravo !" said I. For at least from his greed the world was saved !

* * *

Another goodly man I met; he was engaged in search after knowledge. Bravely he abandoned all and lived alone in a far-off place. "What is thy object ?" of him I asked. "Knowledge of Self," he replied, "and the Knowledge of God." It made me think for a moment. But "Well done !" to him also I said. For at least from his ignorance the world was saved !

* * *

44. IF TRUTH AT LAST BE TOLD

Another was pious and pure beyond doubt, and he even possessed some knowledge. "Wherefore didst thou forsake the world and wend thy way to this lonely place? Much good in life thou wouldest have done, and how much gained thyself!" With a look of pity he said, "Life is *maya*; of what avail is love of that which is not (*maya*)?" "Thou hast done well!" to him I said. For at least from his vanity the world was saved!

* * *

Verily, of egoism is 'renunciation' born. Ye who cannot serve yourselves,—how can ye serve your God? Ye who reject His world to seek 'His Service', serve neither yourselves nor God!

* * *

Peace they desire who cannot fight, and they who fight think not of peace! Of peace and happiness dream the poor—things which even God hath not!

* * *

Many an idler becometh a saint. There was a dearth of everything else, but

never hath the world known a dearth of saints!

* * *

To renounce evil ye renounce life. To find peace, ye build big sepulchres for your souls and in their shadows hide yourselves!

* * *

Alas for the perversity of man! He perverteth God's purpose, perverteth God's language as well! 'Service' hath become a temptation. To be called a 'Servant of God' is a distinction coveted by all. 'Goodness' is a quality of those who assiduously run after fame. 'Charity' is a word tabooed even by the vulgar. 'Virtue' is a synonym of wealth, 'Wisdom' of power, and 'Righteousness' but a veneer of hypocrisy.

* * *

Verily, equally beyond them,—who renounce and who cannot, who give up all and who give not—are religion, virtue, and righteousness. Like unto a river is the flow of charity. Verily, charity is not giving only but also receiving,—accepting

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in humility the gifts of God ! For the poor give naught and beggars can bestow no gifts. Not until thou hast *received* and done good by thyself shalt thou be able to *give*. Indeed, God seeketh but this from thee, that thou shouldst well serve thyself !

SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

VERILY, of long endurance is this tribe. Think not the world is free from them ! Jesus encountered but a few and they were not the worst. They at least observed the Law. But look at our scribes and pharisees: they neither obey nor understand the Law though by it they make their living. And they multiply. We meet them not only in the temples and synagogues, but in every corner and in every walk of life !

* * *

Once in the evening I walked through the town's deserted streets, and lo ! a band of thieves I saw whispering next a *bania*'s shop. By the same street I passed again and there those very men I saw. Much sympathy they evinced and much sorrow at their neighbour's loss. One said, it must have happened like this, another like

that. "There is something wrong with this neighbourhoood," the third opined. "Beware of such neighbours," said the fourth, casting a suspicious glance. Then all exclaimed: "Beware!" "Beware!" How great was their sorrow and how sincere! I too said: "Beware, beware of those who grieve for thee!"

* * *

Once on the beach I walked and from a distance heard this cry: "Allah-o-Akbar! Allah-o-Akbar!" The voice resounded through the waves. It was a fisherman's cry, who casting his net into the sea invoked the aid of great Allah. How pious, indeed, are fishermen and how sweet is the name of Allah! Many a tiny fish flaps its fins as it heareth the Sacred Name; many a one weary of the world wendeth its way to the 'Kingdom of Allah,' saying to itself: "If I can go into the Kingdom of Allah, 'which is like unto a net,' I can come out as well."

* * *

Christ compared the Kingdom of God to a 'treasure hid in a field,' to 'a mustard

seed' and to 'a merchantman'. He, also, compared it to a 'net that was cast into the sea'. And, truly, like unto a net is the Kingdom of Allah! The 'angels' who cast the net and 'sever the wicked from among the just' are none but our scribes and priests. And have they not thrown us 'into the furnace of fire' where there has also been 'wailing and gnashing of teeth'? They differ only in this, that they condemn the just and spare the wicked!

* * *

Carefully did our scribes weave their nets, twisting each thread with a touch of 'faith,' tightening each knot with the gum of 'knowledge'. Theirs are the nets made not by unskilled hands and not of rough, ordinary yarn. Their threads, indeed, are smooth and soft, and think how elastic they are! They open and close at the Fisherman's will and they break not! Yea, they break not by the flutter of rebellious wings!

* * *

Safety man seeketh in this life and safety also in the Kingdom of God! The

fish, when they enter the net, seek 'safety,' methinks, but safety at what cost? The waters of the sea are dangerous but in them there is life. Freedom is dangerous, unbelief is dangerous, but they do not shut out Light.

* * *

The desire for safety has drawn many a fish into a treacherous net. Beware of 'safety first'!

* * *

Hard were the old frames of religion but safe enough for man's greed. They broke when once they fell. But difficult to break are the ones which came in their place.

* * *

What more elastic than man's desire? Pull it where you will, it stretcheth long and breaketh not!

* * *

Clever architects are our scribes. They purchase new bricks from the potter¹ and plaster them upon old walls. There are

¹ Painted 'kasi' bricks are usually made by potters and plastered on the outer walls of the house for purposes of decoration.

bricks green and yellow, there are bricks white and red. To each admirer is pointed the colour and the kind he seeks and he calleth the house after the desire of his heart. But, alas! inside these walls is nothing but the Mortar of Greed and the old black Sand of Desire.

* * *

“Where greed lingereth thieves never starve.” Man is not satisfied with the guarantee of this world. He needeth the guarantee of the other too. And who can give it, who can satisfy man’s desire, except he,—the Prince of Desire? Who but he dare open the gates of God’s Kingdom to such vast numbers?

* * *

Hark! From the altar cometh the cuckoo’s cry. He is the harbinger of Heavenly Spring. Hear him well, brother! hear him well. Many a pious wish he uttereth and many a time doth he sigh. And as the words fall from his lips, the weary souls of winter close their eyes. “Amen! Amen!!” they cry.

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Hear this tale of a pilgrim who worshipped Kali—the Divine Mother. Ramji was the pilgrim's name. Carrying a kid upon his head he sought his way to the temple. Said some thieves who saw him pass: "We shall have it for our meal." Then one midway, another nearby and the third at the temple took his post. "What is wrong with thee, friend!" said the first, "that thou carriest a dog upon thy head?" "Nay, it is a kid," said Ramji and went his way. Then the second thief he met who greeted the pilgrim with these words: "Eh, what a stinking smell doth thy dog possess!" The pilgrim looked up but continued on his way. Then came the third and thus he spake: "Enter not this sacred place with the pollution of a dog upon thy head." And Ramji looked up again. "May be my eyes deceive me," he said, and threw the kid away! Do not our priests do the same? They ask us to throw away our burdens, renounce all wealth and seek nothing but the Kingdom of God! And while they preach, the scribes bear

witness of the 'Law' and the pharisee crieth : "Amen ! Amen !"

Oh Ramji ! beware of thieves !

* * *

If the world and its wealth be what ye should despise and God alone what ye should seek, why seek they not Him ? Why gather they about us like the crows around a corpse ?

* * *

They say, "the *Mullah*'s eyes are fixed on thy head,"—to see whether thy hair be black or grey. The colour of thy hair heralds thy approaching end, and for him the Feast of feasts, the Day after many a weary day !

* * *

For a trifle they offer the Kingdom of God, for a belief or two the joys of Heaven wherein flow the rivers of milk, wherein the dark-eyed *Houries* with swan-like necks abound, and goblets of wine go round and round ! Surely, there is much to reflect in this. Disproportionate are the merits and the reward. "Too good is this bargain," said

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a wise rat to the cat who offered a maund of sweets for the company of a moment. "Dear cat," said the little rat, "the bargain seems too good. One maund of sweets for a little trip!—there is something wrong in this." Yea, there is always something wrong in 'good bargains'.

SLAVE OF ETERNITY

THOU art a slave of Eternity.

* * *

In the Garden of Eden thou wert free,
but thou wert unhappy in thy freedom !

* * *

Lo ! what a cage thou hast built for
thyself ! And thou delightest in its
perfection.

* * *

Thy prison is bounded by lofty walls.
In it hast thou built the Cage of Custom,
guarded by the Walls of Fear. In it is
the Cell of Superstition surrounded by the
Moat of Ignorance which is difficult to
cross and through which flow the filthy
waters of Desire !

* * *

Two things thou desirdest most : ' security ' and ' happiness '. Security is the bait which Satan throws to man ; ' happiness '

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is the illusion that he spreads like a net.
How willingly hast thou entered the net !

* * *

Many customs that have lost their meaning impede thy path. Fears that are unreal sit heavy upon thy heart. Dark superstitions sap the strength of thy soul. And all these find their refuge in religion, which sanctifies thy sins and perpetuates thy bonds !

* * *

Verily, verily, the prophets came not to forge these treacherous chains round thy soul. They came not to establish customs and creeds. They came not to uphold piety but Truth. The war of Liberty they waged : Old forms of slavery perished, but thou hast raised new ones in their place ! Thy instinct of slavery hath been stronger than thy love of freedom. Of the Garden of Eden thou hast made a prison for thyself. Thou hast converted the blessings of religion into an eternal curse !

CHILD OF VANITY

A CHILD of vanity is man. Verily, man's vanity surpasseth all his gifts !

* * *

True, God it was who made the world,
but man it was for whom He made it !

* * *

‘The Pivot of the Universe—the Chosen of God’—thus man styleth himself. Truly, a pet child of God is he. How God tolerates man's follies and smiles at his sins !

* * *

Many a sin hath man committed against God's creation and against Him. Many a time hath the Father forgiven His prodigal son. But now man's hand is lifted against himself. Lo ! there is a war within him. And who will save him from himself ?

Many a rift I perceive within man's being. He hath divided himself into parts. The parts listen no more to what the head commands and the head understands not the democracy of parts !

* * *

'Parties,' 'classes' and 'castes,'—what are they but so many rifts within the lute ?

* * *

What God failed to do a little creature hath accomplished. God either feared or forgave man, and man's vanity knew no bounds. Then the Ant of Desire busied herself and she undertook to redeem the universe from the vanity of man.

* * *

She burrowed a hole within the wall. The hole became a rift. And lo ! one by one man's pillars fall.

* * *

Where the Ant of Desire dwells life decays.

* * *

Like a bubble over the surface of water man stands up a while. "I am the king

of the waters," he says. But the waters only smile !

* * *

The bubbles rise. They seek to stop the current. But soon the wind blows out of them and turns them into froth !

* * *

Verily, like unto bubbles are man's creations. In pride of power they stand. But quietly the river flows and one by one the bubbles burst, creating ugly froth !

* * *

It is the air that makes the bubbles stand. But water harboureth no wind, life suffereth not the proud and truth alloweth no falsehood to cover its face for long.

* * *

Many a dam did man raise and many more he planneth to control the river of life. But, in vain ! Lo ! the banks have broken and there is a flood winding its way through man's being, carrying many a log upon its crest.

“Stop !” “Stop !” cries Canute. “Stop ; we command you waves !” But in vain the Canutes cry !

* * *

Verily, they who seek to stop the current of life are impudent. Let them beware. For they cannot set bounds to that which hath already set bounds to their impudence.

THE NIGHT

THE Night advanceth, and lo ! from the West a storm ariseth. The stars hide themselves !

* * *

Stars ! stars ! look not away from the earth. Flee not upward, friends ! There is need for ~~your~~ light. The Lamp of Life flickereth and darkness spreadeth its wings !

* * *

Alas, oh earth ! for thy stars,—those upon whom thou dependest. Too high do they aspire and come not near the ground. Too much do they love their heights and bright though they shine, they illumine not thy path. Dwelling in the high regions of Pride, little do they know of thy life.

* * *

Earth, oh ye poor children of earth ! light your own earthen lamps to dispel

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the darkness of your Night. Depend no more on stars !

* * *

The Night of unreason advanceth and the stars hide themselves. Here and there a candle burns, but it emits more smoke than light. The wax hath already burnt itself and only the wick remains. Life is exhausted, it is now Desire that stays.

* * *

The Night advanceth and with it the darkness. The storm rageth and slower and slower beateth the pulse of life.

* * *

Alas for thee, oh man ! Thou takest the sounds of destruction for the Song of Life. Thou revellest in thy enjoyments the more. Revel yet a while till the Day revealeth to thee thy desolation and thy pride !

* * *

And now have gathered the Prophets of the Night. They yell and they cry. They tell many tales, but helplessly they stand by. Beware of them who loudly cry !

Alas, ye know not the prophets false from the true. Such be their signs : They that wear white garments without a spot and with feet washed by the lips of their disciples walk over the ways of the world are those who have come not to give but to rob. Know these to be false prophets, my friends !

* * *

Others there be, who bear stains upon their faces : their hands are soiled and their eyes are wet. These, verily, are the ones who enter into the puddles of life and bear many blemishes to create out of mud the plaster of life. But from these men shirk, seeing their garments are not white.

* * *

Man despiseth those whose garments be torn. He worshippeth the thieves who steal his wealth. Man loveth Kings, Popes and Lords whose piety and pomp help to deceive, whose power is used only to rob.

* * *

Men love that best which hurts them most. They kiss the hands that strike and

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the feet that kick. And the more they are struck the more madly do they love.

* * *

Think ye man prefereth day to night or light to darkness? Nay; he is the Owl of Creation,—the Owl that curseth the Dawn and rejoiceth in the Night!

THE MESSAGE OF DEATH

LONG have ye listened to the whispers of life. Hear now the Message of Death :

* * *

Struggle not with me. In vain dost thou try to overcome me, who overcometh all things !

* * *

All things *come over* to me ; in my bosom is their final resting-place. “ Unto me is the return of all things.”

* * *

Thou fearest. By fear is prompted thy war against me. Verily, thy sciences, thy knowledge, thy arts and inventions are products not of thy love of life but of thy fear of death. They are thy devices to forget me,—me who forgetteth naught and even through them reacheth out a hand to thee !

By fear is thy soul ever linked to me.
Were it not for thy flight I should not
pursue thee.

* * *

From Life it is thou fliest, and back
unto Life do I ever bring thee.

* * *

Think not it is aught but my love of Life
that maketh me pursue her puppets. The
difference between my love and thine is
this: in love thou seest nothing but a
promise of 'enjoyment,' whereas I see an
endless opportunity for self-sacrifice! *I*
sacrifice myself for Life; thou sacrificest
Life for thyself!

* * *

See how persistent I am in my love,—
persistent and yet polite! Thou wardest
me off day and night; thou despisest me.
But I return to thee in different forms and
greet thee with a smile. I return love for
thy hatred and good for evil. What I
kill is evil; the good prosper through me.

* * *

Long hast thou listened to the whispers
of 'life'. Long to its desires hast thou

been enslaved. I am death to Desire and only through Desire do I become death to thee.

* * *

Death it is that bestows all sanctity on life. How poor, indeed, shouldst thou be, but for my attentions to thee !

* * *

The secret of Knowledge is suffering ; the secret of Art sacrifice. Not till Art is perfect in sacrifice, does it become perfect in life.

* * *

Me the ancients styled 'the bestower of life'. In my hands is the Key of Life. In my frown is a fountain of mercy, in my quivering sword the Light.

* * *

Mine are the gifts men enjoy, mine the treasures of beauty and knowledge. Life's lovely things are created out of my ceaseless sacrifice. The smiling rose, the green grass, the fruits and flowers in the garden of life,—what are they but the result of my ceaseless strife ? The creatures of the earth, the water, and the

skies live on my toil day and night. Mine is the wisdom born of sorrow, made pure and whole in the flames of love. In me is all that man seeketh,—freedom, peace, and harmony.

* * *

Man knoweth me not. 'Sanity' it is that maketh man a slave. His 'knowledge' maketh him blind. Verily, more doth he know and reason than is good for him !

* * *

If for me man possessed but half the love he showeth for 'life,' his would be a happier lot ; he would have less to fear and more to love.

* * *

I trust in Life. Therefore I can kill what she creates. Thou 'respectest' Life, because in her thou hast no faith !

I am a tireless player. From eternity have I played the game of 'hide and seek'. I play with Life and ye are the pieces of our play.

Christ's glory was proclaimed upon the Cross. Krishna's wisdom was declared on the Battlefield. Not till he attained Nirvana was Gautama proclaimed as the Buddha. These truly were Disciples of Death !

* * *

But where do men seek their salvation to-day ? Not, indeed, upon a cross, nor in the Battlefield of Life. They seek it in the temples and shrines !

* * *

Where do men seek glory and win their laurels to-day ? In Councils and lecture-halls !

* * *

Alas ! The dignity of war is lost. Your battlefields have changed into pits for fighting cocks !

* * *

And what are these places of amusement which men seek even more than their temples and shrines ? What are they ? I ask. There they seek to drown my memory, to kill their sorrows and find relief. But my voice reacheth

there and their sorrows are never healed.

“Ennui!” “Ennui!”—men succumb to Ennui. Strange, they say, is this malady. Doctors with their science combat disease and priests pit their piety against the horrors of hell. But still Ennui pursueth them,—Ennui, my messenger to men !

* * *

My great compassion is unknown to man. My mercy shineth red in my eyes. When I pity Life’s sickly forms, out of love I draw my sword.

* * *

If I spare thee, thou shalt linger but not live. If I kill thee, thou livest through me for ever. For I am but a Door that opens the mysteries of New Life,—a boat that carries Life’s passengers from shore to shore !

* * *

Man too is a lover. He loveth well what he reareth. But, alas ! he reareth only follies !

Man's love is like a stagnant pool. It stagnates till it grows foul. But my love floweth like a river, ever changing, ever fragrant, ever fresh !

* * *

“ Respect life ! ” “ Respect life ! ” cry poor men ! But Life respects them not !

* * *

Life hath no need of respect, but of your love. Love her if ye can, but ‘ respect ’ her not ; from love prevent her not !

* * *

Life is eternally in love with Death. And ye are the progeny of our Faith !

* * *

Alas ! that I should have to haunt you like a fiend instead of walking with you as a friend. Instead of being a guardian and a guarantee I am the despair of old age !

* * *

Fear me not. Oh, call me in ! Lo ! the field of life is covered with weeds. Call the ‘ man with the scythe ’¹ in !

* * *

¹ Name of a picture by Herbert La Thangue showing Death as a reaper with his dark scythe upon his shoulder which ‘ slits the thin-spun life ’.

72 IF TRUTH AT LAST BE TOLD

Let me clear the field of all weeds ; of all thistles and thorns and the roots that are diseased. Oh, call me in !

* * *

I am the precursor of light, the harbinger of each new dawn of Life. Call me in !

* * *

Call me in to burn and destroy ; to uproot and demolish. I am annihilation and waste, but lo ! upon my heels walketh my Eternal Bride. She casteth, as she walketh, the seeds of New Life !

END

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